

MR. FORD IN HIS FIRST CAR



# HENRY FORD'S

## *Experiment in Good-Will*

by

GARET GARRETT



WHEN a meddler drops the wrench into the wonderful mechanism of supply and demand, there is work for the engineers. They denounce his unintelligence, repair the damage, and wearily note another instance to prove the unexceptional working of the governing principle. But fancy a mechanical genius himself doing it deliberately!

Most unexpectedly and at an exceptional time, when the supply of a certain elemental commodity, in Detroit as elsewhere, so greatly exceeded the demand that unemployment was an acute municipal problem, the Ford Motor Company broke the rules with the amazing announcement that it would pay double the market price for labor.

Nothing like that had happened before in all the history of modern industrialism. An unnatural commotion imme-

diately followed. Unemployed rushed to Detroit from other cities. Thousands clamored in vain at the Ford Plant for work, and had at last to be wetted down with a fire hose. And at all of the big hotels, promoters, contractors for automobile parts, economists, newspaper correspondents, efficiency engineers, pension-plan specialists, profit-sharing experts, students of eugenics, seekers of money for worthy purposes, magazine writers, and others stood in line from 8 A. M. till midnight, waiting for rooms and bath at five dollars a day and up.

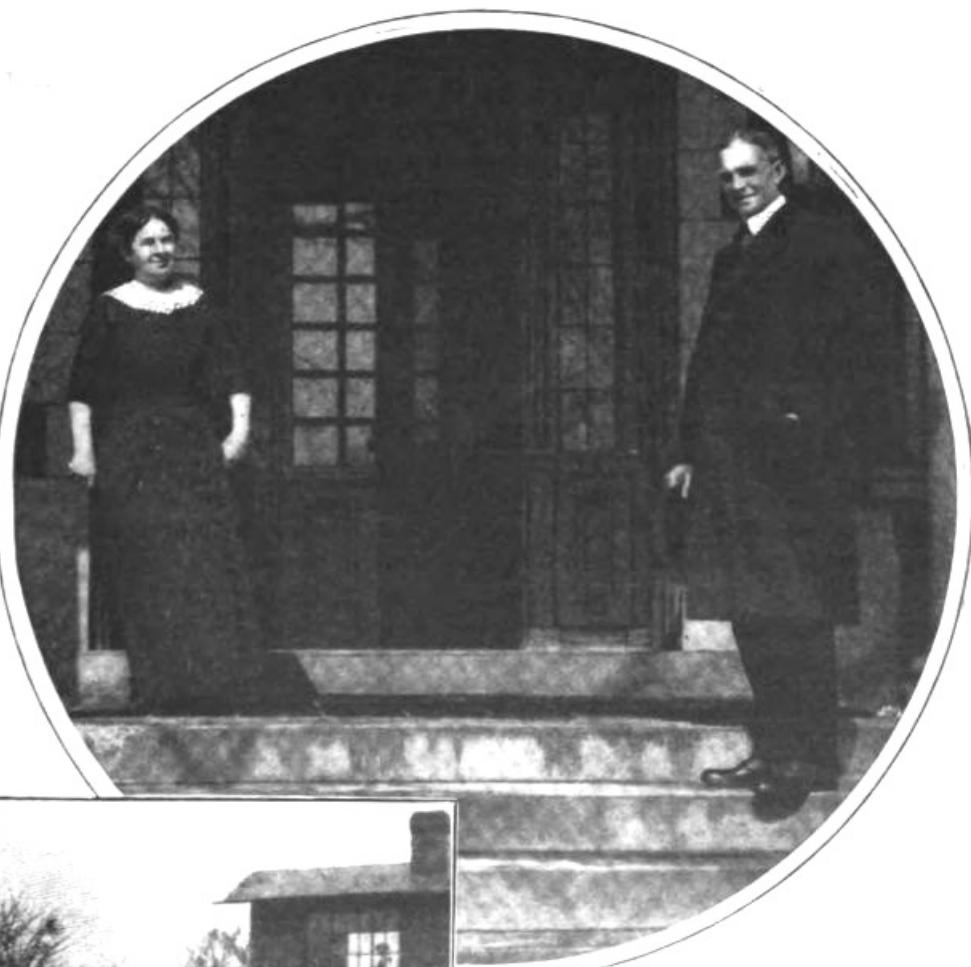
Opinions of the Ford Experiment began violently to differ at the point of first intentions. The announcement was made in a manner to be regarded either as unimaginably naive or so intentionally theatrical as to produce the maximum quantity of advertising. The employees first read of it in

the newspapers. On the morning of January 12 the Detroit papers were notified that there was a story for them at the Ford plant. Three reporters came, one each from the *Free Press*, the *Journal*, and the *News*. They were shown into the office of James Couzens, the vice-president, treasurer, and voice of the Ford Motor Company. Henry Ford was there, with an air of restless detachment from the business in hand, and stood silently by a window while Mr. Couzens read aloud the statement he wished the reporters to publish.

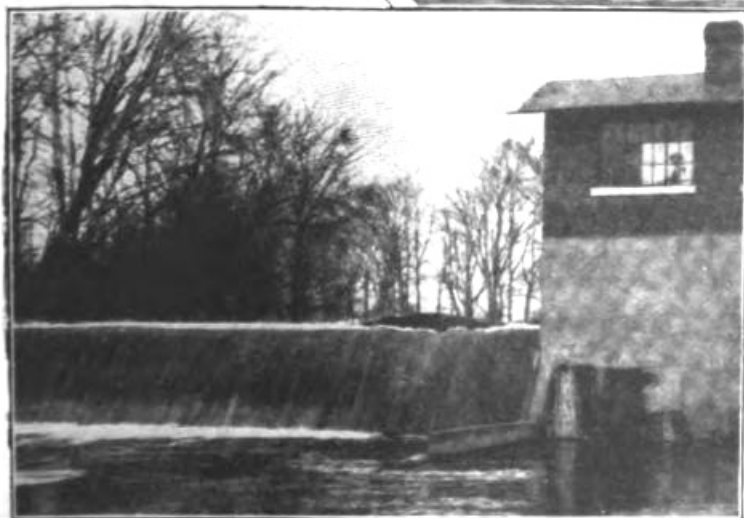
It was, briefly, that on the following Monday a profit-sharing plan would take effect in the Ford plant. It was different from other profit-sharing plans in two important respects: (1) The amount of profit to be shared up with the employees should be enough, when added to the former minimum wage of \$2.34 a day, to make the commonest worker's least remuneration \$5 a day, and (2) it was to be appropriated beforehand from

the estimated earnings of the year's business and paid out fortnightly in the wage envelopes, so that the men should know exactly what to expect and have the use of the money, provided they spent it properly. The company's sociological department would see to that.

The gross amount of company profits necessary to be distributed on this scale would probably be \$10,000,000. It might be more or less. Also, a day's work was to be reduced from nine hours to eight, and the factory, instead of running eighteen hours with two shifts, would work twenty-four with three. Between four and five thousand additional men were to be employed.



DAM AND POWER-PLANT ON THE PLACE MR. FORD IS DEVELOPING AT DEARBORN.



MR. AND MRS. FORD ON THE STEPS OF THEIR DETROIT HOUSE, ON EDISON AVENUE.

"The commonest laborer who sweeps the floor shall receive his five dollars a day," said Mr. Ford.

"But, Mr. Ford," said one of the reporters, "to-morrow morning there will be five thousand men out there in the street with brooms!"

"No, nothing like that," said Ford.

The reporter's estimate was too low. Daylight in Highland Park disclosed ten thousand anxious waiting men. They were all from the city and near by, and had been gathering since midnight, thinking that the first in line might be taken. The employment office could not be opened at all; instead, the police had to come to keep order. On the second day it was worse. The news had begun to attract the unemployed from outside, and, besides, men making only two or three dollars a day left their jobs to come. As early as midnight men could be seen setting out through Woodward Avenue for a walk of seven miles to the Ford Plant at Highland Park, hoping to get good places in the line.

Then, on the next Monday morning, when the plan was to take effect and when the hours were changed to three shifts of eight instead of the former two of nine, a heartbreaking thing happened. The mob was swollen to its largest proportions, and so invested the Ford Plant that the employees, wearing their badges and anxious to be at work on time, were unable to enter. The doors had to be opened in a very cautious manner, for fear the human tide, once it got an inlet, would overrun the works, obeying an instinct just to get inside and leave the rest to Providence.

The employees, wanting to get in, became greatly excited. They began to form flying wedges to break through the ranks of the unemployed. A serious riot seemed imminent. In desperation the police brought out the fire hose, with which they had threatened the mob before, and now the stream was turned full into the faces of the unemployed. That cleared the way. The employees came through to their work; but the plight of the unemployed, weary from the long vigil, hungry, and now wet to the skin, was pitiful. The weather was very cold. In their exasperation they seized food from the sandwich men along the curb lines, overturned their empty carts for spite, and stoned the police. Their missiles broke some windows in the Ford Plant. There was irony!

Everybody was sorry and somewhat ashamed. The newspapers, in the first place, had, for the sake of the story, overemphasized the note of prosperity and given many false impressions to the unemployed. They should have emphasized the fact that

an applicant for one of the five-dollar jobs would have to submit himself to rigid investigation. The authors of the experiment had underestimated the psychological effect of their announcement. And the police of Highland Park had not exercised the ingenuity which would have saved them from a desperate dilemma.

First incidents, fresh, colorful, and without perspective, had a tendency unfortunately to emotionalize the Ford Experiment. Comment near by was quite what you would expect, beginning, say, with the hotel barber, who delicately reminded the stranger that "Mr. Ford has been raising wages around here;" touching the manufacturer who despaired of ever seeing a stable labor market in Detroit again; and ending with the citizen who complained, first, that by taking his plant out to Highland Park a man named Ford had littered up the city's best street-car line with a lot of laborers one couldn't wish to sit with, and was then crazy enough to think he could make gentlemen of them by giving them five dollars a day, which, of course, would ruin them.

#### "SPECIALIZE"—THE ANSWER

The first clue to any local understanding of the larger implications of the Ford Experiment was the illuminating comment of a big lawyer whose clients are men prominent in the industrial affairs of Detroit.

"People are very much divided about this thing," he said. "Its effect upon the labor market is yet to be seen. But there is more to it than that. Only yesterday a group of men with a lot of money invested in a plant that has not been doing very well, on looking it over, said to their manager: 'We think you ought to specialize more here. Don't you think you make too many things? See what Ford has done.'"

Then one heard of Ford's strong retort to the stove-makers, who constitute perhaps the largest and oldest single body of employers in Detroit. They were terribly upset. Some of the things they said were repeated to Ford. He replied: "A stove-maker here in Detroit makes ten, fifteen, I don't know how many kinds of stoves. Let him make only one kind. If he will specialize he may be able to raise wages."

The purely emotional aspect was interesting. Before the end of the second week, the city editor of one of the Detroit papers had



a drawerful of poetry on Ford, most of it very bad as poetry, but touching for what it meant, written by men and women, some of whom could hardly spell, let alone set words into feet. The paper began by printing the best of it, and had to stop because there was altogether too much.

"I happened to mention that to Mr. Ford's secretary," said the reporter who had been on the "Ford story," "and he said that was nothing. I should see what they were getting. He showed me hundreds of letters containing just such verses as these."

The reporter believed he had the true theory of what Ford had done, and he was worth hearing, because he had talked with Ford more than other reporters. He said that by a very fortunate miracle Ford had got rich without being spoiled—without the time to forget that he, too, had been very poor, and had never been paid what he earned when he worked for others; and the rest was very simple.

That was something to think about.

It was surprising how little the people of Detroit really knew of Henry Ford. There was no accepted Ford legend. Fame and wealth had overtaken him too suddenly. There were few, for instance, who knew that he had been born at Dearborn, on a farm, ten miles out Michigan Avenue way. But many could remember perfectly that twenty odd years ago he was a crank who believed he could build a motor vehicle to go about in.

He was then working for the Edison Electric Light Company as engineer, "over there behind the Cadillac Hotel." The gas-engine interested him tremendously, and he spent all of his leisure time trying to construct a miniature thing on the same principle to propel a little buggy. When it was done he brought it out into the street and people cheered him; then they laughed to see him push it back.

That happened again and again, until people would jeer at him on expectation. Then at last he said he had solved it; on a certain day he would appear in his machine, drive it a long distance and back without mishap—positively. He appeared on schedule time, did a block and a half, and broke down again. That settled it. Detroit tried and convicted him of being her champion "bug," and would not walk across the street to see him fail again.

One day, when nobody was particularly

interested, he came out with a motor-buggy that would run up-hill and down-hill, backward and forward, and not stop until he desired it to. He had succeeded. That was the original machine on the evidence of which, almost single-handed, he beat the "Selden patents."

Detroit then conceded him to be a mechanical genius, but it could not imagine his being at the same time gifted with any practical sagacity, especially a high order of business sense. Hence the assertion that the wonderful commercial success of the Ford Motor Company was owing to other brains.

But that is no sooner said than qualified. Once when Henry Ford was in Europe, the proprietors of an automobile business that had never succeeded commercially went to his associates and said: "You know how to make automobiles and we don't. We've got a fine plant and we make a very good car, but somehow we haven't been able to make it pay. We can not afford to confess failure. Won't you come and look it over? If you can see how to make it pay we will sell out on very easy terms."

#### FORD'S BUSINESS BRAINS

They did look it over, and agreed to take it, subject to the final approval of Henry Ford. When he returned they put the papers before him, with the air of stewards who had made good use of their time.

"It is a bargain," said Ford; "but what are you going to do with it?"

"Why," they said, "we know how to run an automobile factory, don't we?"

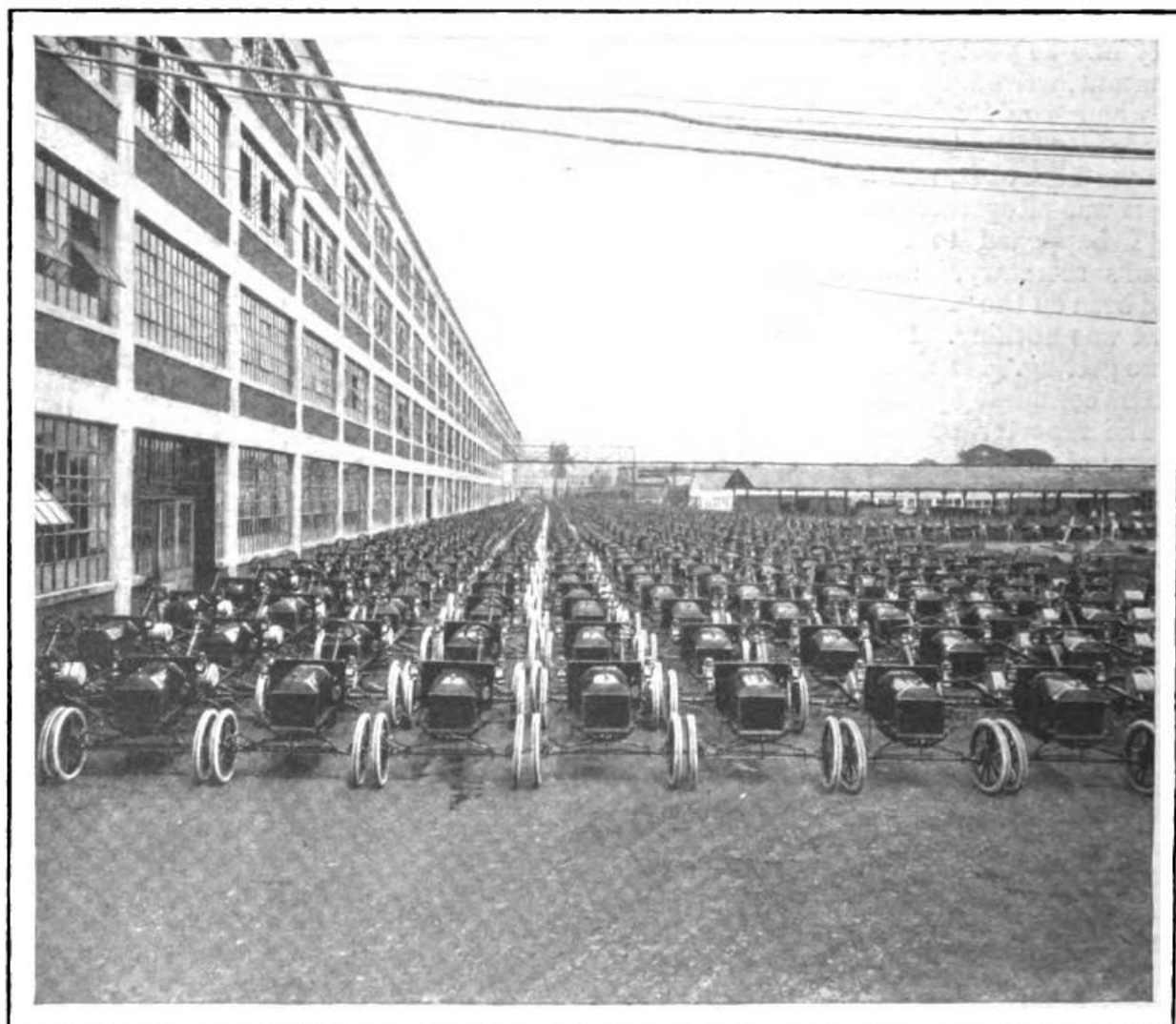
"Will you make Ford cars?" asked Ford.

They said no. They would continue to make the kind of cars the plant had been turning out—a higher-priced car than the Ford—and make it pay by introducing efficiency into the shop.

Ford replied: "We make only one kind of car. That is the Ford car. If you thought of making any other kind, you were wrong; and if you thought of making Ford cars over there in that plant, you were wrong. It is too far away."

The bargain was rejected.

Thus, against a background of many contradictions, grew a man of parts. Some who thought they knew him very well said his profit-sharing plan was pure philanthropy, out of a well of human sympathy. Others, knowing him better in another way



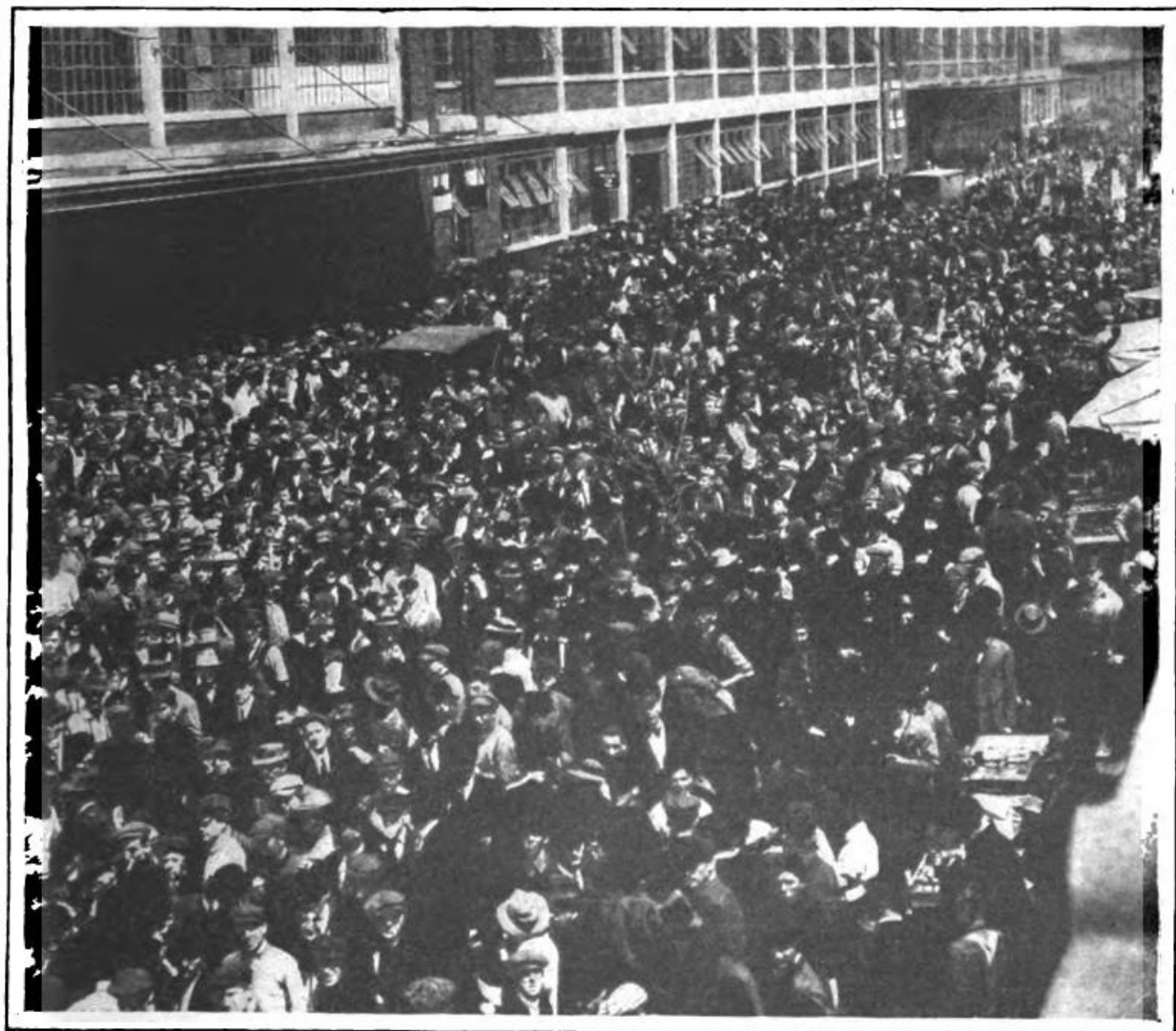
A DAY'S OUTPUT OF CHASSIS AT THE FORD FACTORY. "ON THE ASSEMBLING FLOOR," SAID MR. FORD, "WHERE THE OUTPUT HAD BEEN NINETY CARS AN HOUR, AFTER THE PROFIT-SHARING PLAN WAS STARTED IT WENT TO ONE HUNDRED AND FIVE."

looked at it shrewdly and said it was very good business, though they were not sure it originated in his head. At any rate, to those who lifted up their hands, saying, "But sweepers—think of paying sweepers five dollars a day!"—Ford himself had said, "Why, a sweeper can save five dollars a day in small tools and parts off the floor of the shop."

Obviously, the answer to the Ford Experiment would be Ford himself. To reach him became somewhat of a problem. His secretary often knew no more than anybody else where to find him. He might spend a whole day going about in the factory bareheaded and leave without reporting to his office. He had been deluged with letters and telegrams. The clerical force was weeks behind. The fact that EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE wanted a little of his time was a matter of no intrinsic interest.

He disliked making and keeping appointments and, besides, as the secretary said, one couldn't begin to imagine how many people were trying all at one time to see him. He had not been heard from since morning. To-morrow, perhaps, if Mr. Ford was in the humor, something could be done.

It was somewhat of a surprise the next morning to find the author of so much commotion alone in a room forty feet square, sitting at a flat desk in a corner between two great windows, seemingly quite disengaged. The desk was clean. There were no papers or letters. He called out cheerily and stood up to shake hands. Then he slouched his tall body into the swivel chair, swung around to face the light, put his feet on the window-sill, and waited to hear with what inanity a magazine writer would attempt to make conversation. It seemed



A CROWD OF WORKMEN OUTSIDE THE FORD FACTORY AT LUNCH HOUR. ABOUT FIFTEEN THOUSAND PERSONS ARE EMPLOYED IN THE DETROIT PLANT.

best to dispense with preliminaries.

"If all that you have done, Mr. Ford, is to make the employees of the Ford Motor Company richer and happier than others, that is a matter of limited interest. But if the experiment will force other manufacturers to adopt your theory of intense specialization in order to increase their own and labor's profits, that is a matter of much greater consequence. It is the amount of profit that gives your plan its——"

"It isn't the amount," he said. "It's the principle of division."

He spoke, then and thereafter, with terse finality, looking hard and warily at the source of interrogation. His eyes were squinted against the strong window light. Triangular wrinkles stood in his lower middle forehead, which is very prominent.

"There must be profits before division," he was reminded. "Unless there is some-

thing over the cost of capital and management, there will be nothing to divide with labor. What did you say about the stove-makers?"

He took his feet down suddenly from the window-ledge and sat up high. "Take anything you see," speaking rapidly. "Take that window-lift or the radiator. If a man will make one thing he will be able to make it better and cheaper than anybody else, because he can standardize his practise and reduce his costs; and there will be an unlimited market for it in this big country."

With that, he resumed his former position. "There must be some limit to the multiplication of parallel operations?"

"What?" he said, only turning his head.

"If you multiply parallel operations infinitely your problems are bound to increase. Brandeis says your genius consists in having limited your problems. At what



point does the mere magnitude of production begin to balance the efficiency of specialization? There is the problem of internal transportation—just the moving of material about in huge quantities.”

“There is no such point,” he said, taking down his feet again and picking up from the window-sill a tiny metal form. “There,” he continued, “is a certain part. It is one of thousands, all alike. Now, imagine a long row of machines all making that identical thing and nothing else. To double the output you only put ten more machines in another row.” He shook his head. “There is no point at which bigness penalizes efficiency—at least, we’ve never had it in sight yet. The more standardized work you can do under one roof, the more efficiently you can do it. And when the problem of internal transportation, as you say, becomes important, we cheapen the transportation, as I’ll show you in the shop.”

“The effect upon the individual—have you considered that?”

“What?” he asked. His *what's* were of high velocity.

“You put a man at a machine, teach him to control it, and he stands there weeks and months and years, mechanically producing one trifling thing. How does it affect him temperamentally?”

“It drives him crazy,” said Ford, positively, as he had said everything else. “But we take care of that,” he added. “We see to it that a man doesn’t do one thing too long. We keep him moving through the shop.”

“Bigness, then, must be limited in some other way. Is there enough executive ability in the world to duplicate many times the Ford organization?”

It was evidently a matter he had not settled to his own satisfaction. He answered slowly: “I suppose executive ability is born in you. It has to come through in its own way.” He represented its coming through by working his fingers in the air. “Though there is less difference between men than we imagine,” he said. “What one can do, another may.”

The same thought occurred to him again when he was asked if his most difficult problem was not the unintelligence of labor. He refused to think it unintelligent at all. He could take a man off the street, out there, quite raw, and make a good molder of him

in a few weeks. He knew because he had done it. The proof was in the shop. There was a lot of nonsense about apprenticeship. The important thing was not to tell a man too much at once—to crowd his mind. It was like crowding a buzz saw. Tell him only what was necessary in the beginning and the rest he would learn by observation. That was true not only in shop practice but in education of any sort. The heads of departments all through his organization were men who had come up through experience, and he would back them sublimely against all the theorists and college-trained specialists in the world.

Moreover, if you took an average specimen of common laborer, the kind the best people of Detroit objected to in the street-cars, and washed and combed and dressed him up, nobody could tell the difference.

#### PROFIT-SHARING AND MARRIAGE

Just then the two men who had charge of the profit-sharing plan came in to say that the newspapers were getting it all wrong. They were talking about a minimum wage of five dollars a day, whereas there was no such thing. The minimum wage was \$2.34 per day, as before, and the other \$2.66 was profit.

“Oh, let them alone,” said Ford, without turning from the window. “They will get it explained. Give them time.”

The chief engineer, one of those who had come up through shop experience, walked in, and one of the two in charge of the profit-sharing plan asked him if he had heard of any marriages since the plan went into effect. They were trying to encourage marriage. The engineer was thinking of a problem out in the shop, and said: “Oh, I don’t know. I don’t care a damn about that.”

“No,” said Ford, swinging around, twinkling, his face all wrinkled. “You don’t. But you’re married, and I’m married, and all of us here are, so marriage is a good thing. The more of that the better.”

As the engineer’s problem could wait and as the misunderstanding of the profit-sharing plan was less serious than those in charge of it supposed, the office was presently left to Ford and his visitor, who said:

“But see here—a lot of men out there in the shop, getting five dollars a day in their envelopes, will not distinguish between wages and profits. Now suppose next year

the profit available to be distributed among them is less. Will they not feel that their *wages* have been cut?"

Ford only shook his head and put his feet in the window again. "That's a year off. Maybe they will learn in a year."

"Have you had time to observe the effect of the plan upon the efficiency of the men?"

He quickened with enthusiasm. "On the assembling floor," he said, "where the output had been ninety cars an hour, it went at once to one hundred and five."

"And did it hold there?"

"We let them go for a week," he said, "and then we had to pull them down again to about ninety. They were getting ahead of the job."

The Ford plant is keyed to a certain output. No one department can work faster than another and keep it up without throwing the whole shop out of tune. It was evident that Ford was as much interested in the human materials with which he worked as in, say, vanadium steel, and before the conversation should drift elsewhere it seemed proper to touch a delicate matter.

"Did you not greatly underestimate the immediate effect of your announcement?"

That hurt. It reminded him of the unemployed in mobs and of the Monday riot.

"I never gave it a thought," he said. "You see, although it struck the public as something very novel and surprising, it was old to us. We had contemplated it for a long time. We were on the point of doing it a year ago, and then decided that we had better increase our working capital, in order to be absolutely sure of our financial independence. We never borrow a dollar." He pulled a wry smile. "I doubt if we could borrow much if we wanted it," he continued. "That was our settled policy—first to build up a large working capital and then to begin to divide our profits with the men who earned them for us. The idea was an evolution. Our sociological department was a step in that direction. We had to have that first in order to be able to see that the men made proper use of their profits. We know there are some out there who can't stand prosperity."

"That touches a point on which you have been criticized. If the men earn this money, why is it any of your business to see how they spend it?"

"It is," he said, with great finality. "It

is our business to see that they spend their money right. That applies not only to the men out there in the shop but to every one in this organization, all the way up to the top. We have stopped some of our highest-paid men from spending money improperly."

#### IN PLACE OF DISCHARGE

It was simply not arguable. He knew that an employer should be responsible for both the means and the manners of his employees—first to see that they have enough and then that they do with it as they should. As he settled it with that air, and turned his back to it, one had a moment in which to think of the master and guild of old, when an industrial group was like a large family, all with a common interest in varying shares, from the head down to the apprentice; and to wonder if Ford, unconsciously, was seeking a return to that condition, after all the intervening years of an industrial system under which the employer could treat the laborer as raw material, to be bought like any other commodity.

"But take the concrete case of a man who is found to be spending his money improperly?"

"We'd stop him," said Ford.

"You mean you would discharge him?"

"Nobody is ever discharged here," he replied, "unless he becomes quite a hopeless case. No, we'd just take hold of him. We've always done that."

"Is it your idea that a man who spends more money than he can afford is either distracted or worried, and that in either case his personal efficiency is impaired?"

"You've got it exactly," he replied. "That's why it's our business to know."

"How do you do with grumblers?"

"The grumblers?" He stared.

"Among twenty-five thousand men you would find grumblers, though they owned the earth."

"Oh, of course," he said, relieved and twinkling. "Now and then we find one. We straighten him out."

"How?"

"Well," he said, "there are only two things to make a man unhappy here. One is that he hasn't enough work to do, and the other is that he has trouble at home. We can give him more work in the shop. That is easy."



"And at home——"

"He gets five dollars a day," said Ford, anticipating.

He is a wisp of writhing nerves, no one of which lies amicably against another. He can not be still. He neither smokes nor drinks, nor eats very much, having found a man in a book who lived to be 104 on fourteen ounces of simple food a day. While talking, he twists his watch chain, pinches his lips or his nose, and strokes his face. His hands are always moving. They reflect the mind which can hardly wait for a question to be finished. Its decisions are nervous and sudden.

#### NO UNIONS

One morning the superintendent of a certain department came to him and said the tool-makers, of whom there were ninety, had been circulating union literature, calling upon the employees to organize. Ford said to the superintendent that they would soon stop that. At ten o'clock sharp the superintendent would turn off the switch in that department and tell the tool-makers they were all discharged; and at ten o'clock sharp the superintendent did. There was never any more trouble with unions.

There could be no union in the Ford shop. His ideas about that were very positive. Trade unionism was nothing that he could see but a lot of agitators.

He stopped there, slid away down in his chair, and elevated his feet higher on the window-ledge. It was somewhat of a shock. Any manufacturer might have done it.

"What happened after that?" he was asked.

"What? Oh, you mean about the tool-makers," he said, recalling where he had stopped. "Why, then we put our investigators out and looked every one of them up. Gradually we took them back—all but two or three of the worst, who had started it, and—yes—afterward we took them back, too. We got all of them back."

"Mr. Gompers and other union labor people seem to approve of your profit-sharing plan?"

"Yes," he replied, absently. "That's only because it means higher wages. Everybody approves of that."

He was told of the verses in the city editor's drawer in Detroit and in the office of his own secretary. That, he said, was mere-

ly the result of trying to do good. Though his plan had some rough spots, no doubt, and was subject to modifications, it was bound to succeed. Anything good would inevitably succeed. But doing good was not always to please, as, for instance:

"If you find out what men want and give them that, you are pleasing them. If you find out what is good for them and give them that, you are performing a service. That's what we are trying to do."

A word casually spoken threw him into a train of outside reflection. He had been to a theatre. He had forgotten the name of the show and the names of the principal actors, but the play was about a girl who was innocent; everybody was for her and wanted to help her, because everybody knew she was innocent.

"That's all right," he said. "But I always feel that I want to be for the other kind."

"On the assumption that God will take care of innocence."

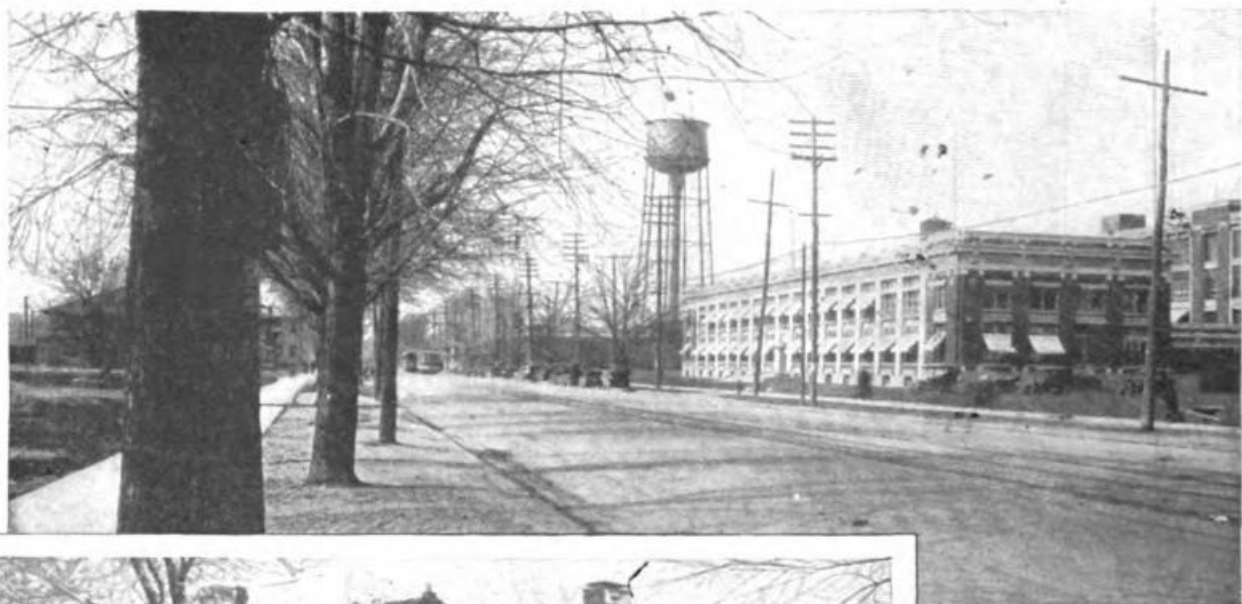
His face wrinkled. He nodded his head. One saw then that the eyes were gray. There hadn't been time to think of it before. He spoke hesitatingly of a certain thing. In the shop, out there, were a lot of men, maybe fewer than a hundred, maybe more, who were of that other kind. Nobody knew it but himself and the judges and the police. He personally vouched for them in the beginning and went good for their board to get them started. They were turning out very well.

"People are all right," he announced, facing the magazine visitor as if he feared it might be disputed. He sat up straight in his chair and locked his long, restless hands over the top of his head. It is a remarkable head, perfectly balanced, with the mark of high constructive ability, called the engineer's mark, in the extra width just below a line drawn level over the tops of the ears. The mouth is thin and tight, but not hard.

"People have not the faith they once had," he continued, "faith in the things everybody believed when this world in a certain way was more religious. They began to be very skeptical. They wanted proof that the whale swallowed Jonah, and when nobody could absolutely prove it they lost faith in many other things. My idea of heaven, if there is such a place and you can go there, is that the only thing you



**HENRY FORD, THE MANUFACTURER WHO HAS TAKEN HIS EMPLOYEES  
INTO PARTNERSHIP.**



BELOW, MR. FORD'S  
RESIDENCE IN  
DETROIT. ABOVE,  
ACROSS TWO  
PAGES, THE FORD  
FACTORY.

can take along is good will. That is all that's left in the world—the good will of your fellow men. Have you read a book called *Immortality*? Well, you ought to read it. I'll send it to you. I was buying some books for Christmas and happened to run across this. The man who wrote it was Maeterlinck."

His restlessness, which had been increasing, suddenly overcame him. "I don't like this office," he said. "I come here only to meet people. Let's go out in the shop."

He led off first into the laboratory, that is, his own experimental workshop. It is equipped with beautiful power-tools and a selected group of mechanics, responding to their given names. "If you were not here I'd be working on that," he said, pointing to a magneto in an experimental stage. He was passing a dark corner and stopped to drag out into the light a contrivance which at first was unrecognizable.

"That," he said, "is the original car. The only reason it won't run now is that

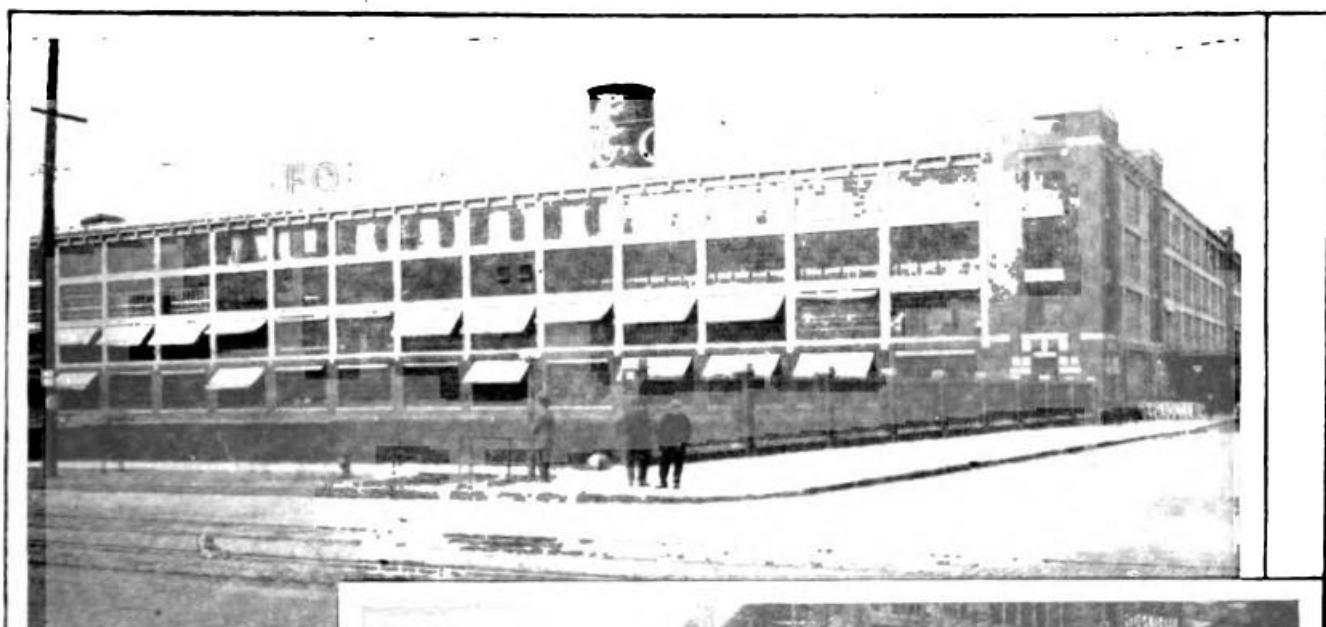
they have been taking souvenirs off."

He indicated ruefully the things that were gone. His apology reminded one of the lessons he had learned by grueling experience—that it was the first and fundamental business of a motor-car to run.

When he saw that it was regarded with some glimmer of mechanical interest he got down on the floor and began to go over it in detail. That flange—you never could guess what that was. It was a railroad washer. The hub of a wheel was a little piece of gas-pipe. The fly-wheel he had "turned up" at night, in the shop alone, on his own time. The whole thing he had constructed with his own hands out of junk. And it beat the Selden patents.

The Ford "shop" is wonderful, not only mechanically, but in other respects. The men, as shop managers say, are "up on their toes." Nobody works very hard, but everybody keeps at it with amazing constancy. You would find nothing in the world like it outside of a shop where the piece-work





THE ADDITION  
NOW BEING BUILT  
TO THE FORD  
MOTOR PLANT.



system prevails. Ford will have no piece-work. He thinks it teaches men to cheat.

"Do you see all those visitors?" he asked, waving an arm widely, "and that the men do not notice them? My superintendent used to complain that too many visitors went through. The men stopped to stare at them and it was a waste of time. I said, 'I'll settle that. I'll send so many visitors through that the men won't bother to look at them.' And you see—the visitors have to keep out of the way of the men."

Not everything that goes into a Ford car is made in the Ford plant. The bodies, until recently, were all made outside, and most of them are still. Ford stopped in the receiving department to show how efficiently it was handled; and mention quite naturally was made of the criticism that the outside contractors could not afford to pay their labor five dollars a day. His answer was that if they couldn't, it was their own fault.

"We don't drive hard bargains," he said.

"I would not let a contract unless I could see the contractor's way to make a profit. When we find that one is not making money on a contract he has with us, we send our own specialists to look him over and make suggestions. We never let a contract to a company owned by absent capitalists and managed by a hired man. We do business only with a man who owns and conducts his own business."

In the office, when at length he reluctantly returned to it, was one of the outside contractors.

"What is the minimum wage in your shop?" Ford asked him abruptly. The contractor was startled. He admitted \$2.25 a day, and then shaved it a little.

"You ought to raise it to five dollars," said Ford. "Raise the common shop labor to five, and raise the higher-paid men less."

The contractor moved his head elliptically.

"How did you arrive at that figure as the minimum?" Ford was asked.

That was simple. With living so high, it was impossible for a man to live as he should on less.

There was a rumor that he discriminated against foreign labor. But that was not true. What, then, was his answer to the objection that an alien laborer, after having received five dollars a day for a long time, and with most of it saved, returned to the old country, taking his capital with him?

"Suppose he does," said Ford. "What does he do over there with his money? He buys a little piece of ground and builds a house with the stones he finds on it, and lives very comfortably afterward. I see no objection to that."

"Especially as you have a weakness that way yourself."

"What?" he asked.

"The way of a man who returns to the land where he was born and moves the rocks and trees around."

He was merry.

"At Dearborn where I'm building—you mean that? You've been out there. I am moving some trees. And the lake. You saw that? There was a pond there, and one day I saw a pair of wild ducks on it. I said if we built a real pond and gave them something to eat and kept people from shooting at them, maybe a lot of ducks would come to visit us. And they have."

He is developing a country place of three thousand acres at Dearborn, fifteen miles from Detroit, where the Ford homestead was, and where, twenty-odd years ago, Henry Ford was often seen lying on his back in the road under the original car trying to find out why it stopped, with Mrs. Ford patiently waiting above. The Dearborn folk felt sorry for her then.

One question there was that took him out of the window and back to the point in his fifty-one years where he could place the beginning of things.

"I was always tinkering with wheels," he said. "My father used to give me Cæsar. It didn't help much on the farm. As a boy I took apart and put together again, I suppose, a thousand watches and clocks. I could make a watch."

"And your theory of specialization—did you consciously think that out, or did it grow out of experience?"

"Why, you know," he replied, "when as a boy I was taking a watch apart I used to think that perhaps some day I should make watches, and, if I did, that I'd make good watches and a lot of them, all alike."

"Possibly that was owing to the annoyance of finding no two alike?"

He twinkled in his inimitable way. "Maybe," he said. "But if only you think of it, the advantages of making a lot of things all alike are very obvious. Take a watch. A good watch is good enough for anybody. If you make enough watches and make them all alike you can make them very cheap. Whatever you make you must be sure to make it good."

The contractor was patiently listening. It seemed time to shake hands with a magazine writer. There was one thing more.

"Have you tried to imagine, Mr. Ford, what the effect of your experiment will be ten years hence?"

"I know what the effect will be here," he replied, with not the slightest hesitation. "It will go on. And after I'm dead it will go on. I'll fix it that way. I own fifty-eight per cent. of the stock, and I can do with it what I like. Can't I?"

"But the effect upon industry in general—have you thought of that?"

"I have," he said. "I haven't said so before, but I have."

And that was all he would say.

It will go on. That is his idea of what must happen, just as in the first place a motor-car had to go on. The amazing thing is that a man of his mechanical intelligence had such unlimited faith in a little gasoline engine as to be willing to waste his life trying to adjust it to the work of propelling a fool-proof road vehicle.

A gasoline engine is imperfect in mechanical principle. On three revolutions in four it is working against itself. In spite of that it has become a miracle of general utility. Ford now has the same unlimited confidence in human material, with all its imperfections, that he had in poppet valves.

See Page 433 for the beginning of "Persons Unknown," an absorbing mystery serial, by Virginia Tracy.